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A MODEST ANSWER TO Dr. Dove's SERMON;

PREACHED AT

Bow-Church

BEFORE THE

Lord Mayor

AND

Court of ALDERMEN,

ON

The Day for the Election of a *Lord Mayor*.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

XI

A Modest

ANSWER

TO

Dr. Doves SERMON,

Preached at

BOW-CHURCH before the *LORD MAYOR* and Court of *Aldermen* on the Day for the Election of *Lord Mayor*.

THE tendency of the Christian Religion is to induce her followers to a Conformity to the Rules thereof, two principal Rules whereof are Charity and Obedience; the latter is the Doctrine pressed and inculcated in the Doctors

ctors Sermon. But although he thus preſſeth Obedience to Magiſtrates, wherein he doth well; ſo likewiſe his Conceſſion is excellent, when enforcing the aforeſaid Doctrine, *page* 10. of his Sermon, he ſaith, *If that paſs into a Law, which is repugnant or inconſiſtent with the Laws of God, we muſt ſubmit under it, though we muſt not comply with it, for here that antecedent Rule takes place, to Obey God rather than Man.* But if a mans private Conſcience cannot aſſent to the Publick Conſcience, ſince the Apoſtle *Paul* argueth, *What is not of Faith, is Sin*; if then a Man muſt in conformity to the publick Conſcience captivate his private Conſcience contrary to the dictates thereof, though diſſenting from the publick Conſcience: what means the Doctors aſſertion, *Page* 14. *There is no ſuch phraſe throughout the Bible as Liberty of Conſcience.* Which if there be not in the very words or phraſe, yet is implyed in the ſenſe and driſt of the before cited Argument of the Apoſtle: But further he ſaith, *Page* 23. *The Government has a right to tye the Conſciences of Men by the firmeſt bonds it can.* Now if the Conſciences of men which are free and unconſtrain'd muſt be tyed, it muſt be by threatnings and Puniſhments, which may indeed make ſome men Hypocrites, but can make no men true Converts to any opinion or Doctrine whatſoever; nay Biſhop *Sanderſon* himſelf acknowledgeth and ſaith, in his Sermons, Vol. 1. p. 102. *Ad Magiſtratum*; *There hath been left, for any thing I find to the contrary, in all well*

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governed Polities, a kind of Latitude more or less, and power in the Magistrates, even in those Courts that were strictissimi Juris, *upon fit occasion to qualifie and mitigate something the Rigor of the Laws by the Rules of Equity:* thus far Bishop *Sanderson*, and indeed most convenient is it in point both of Charity and Policy not to force men contrary to their Consciences, or at least wise as Bishop *Sanderson* saith, that the Rigour of the Laws in that case be suspended, for, He that is suffered to enjoy under a State the freedom of his Religion, when differing from the publick Profession, has not only the common tye of a Subject upon him, for his protection as a man, but the cumulative obligation, and thanks to pay for his Indulgence as a Christian under such a Character. Subjects in such a posture, as they will ever be studious of an opportunity, to testifie their grateful fidelity, and by some eminent Service to lay up a stock of Merit, that may secure their future quiet; so they will be of any, most careful not to forfeit so pleasing an Indulgence, by falling under a publick displeasure. A Prince in such a state of things, by making himself a common Father to the whole Protestant Religion, though made up of some differences within it self, will be secured not only of that common Homage of Obedience and Subjection, but with it, that more noble, of the Hearts, and Affections of all his Protestant Subjects.

But if you suppose the Dissenters to be possessed with Errors, yet Persecution of them for

their profeſſion of Religion, and adherence to the Doctrines they Embrace, is apt to make the profeſſors thereof, think them more than ordinary Truths, and themſelves ſome great men in maintaining them; ſo it makes others ſeek after that, when driven into a Corner, which were it in the open ſtreets, no man would Regard. He that Preaches and writes under reſtraint, that reſtraint begets him Readers and Hearers, that would elſe paſs through the World with very little notice taken of him: things difficult and hard to be come by, carry ſome weight in mens expectancy: Fooliſh and abſurd Opinions are only put to Nurſe by Perſecution, and by that made to have ſomething in the concerns and fears of others, which has indeed nothing in it ſelf. The hiding men by a keen purſuit after them, in the profeſſion of ſuch things, keeps them alive; whereas if they openly preached, writ, and were diſcourſed, the folly of them would appear ſuch, as not only others, but the men themſelves would be aſhamed and aweary of them.

Nay, Were there no other reaſon to make a Prince or a State out of love with puniſhing men for Religion, and matters of that nature, this were ſufficient, to conſider ſuch puniſhment ever falls upon the moſt honeſt of his ſubjects in every differing party; men of looſe juggling principles, and unſound Hearts, will be ſure to eſcape the Net; only the ſin-

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ſincere plain-hearted man, that cannot diſſemble, is caught; 'twas the deviſe againſt *Daniel* heretofore, They knew in the matters of his God 'twas eaſie to deal with him, becauſe in thoſe he would not upon any terms diſſemble.

This has Three ill Effects alwayes attending it.

1. It diſobliges the beſt ſort of men in every party, whom the State ſhould moſt cheriſh and engage; whatever is ſaid to the contrary, thoſe that are the trueſt Subjects to the Great King, will be alſo found the beſt to his Vicegerents here: 'Tis a ſtrange Heterodox kind of policy, to make all the honeſt, ſincere men in a Nation, of every party, but that one the State adheres to, the object of the States diſpleaſure, and to make Laws that can have no other effect, but their Suffering.

2. All ſtanders by, the generality of a Nation looking on, muſt needs be diſ-ſatisfied, to ſee a Plain honeſt man, upright and punctual in all his dealings amongſt men, puniſhed meerly for his Conſcience to God; and becauſe he will not comply to ſave himſelf, which nothing but his Conſcience can lead him to, and by parting with which, he may at any time Purchaſe his quiet; in ſuch a caſe common ingenuity begets pity for him, if not Proſelytes to him, and great diſlike of the courſe taken with him.

3. Though it be a ſecret, yet 'tis a very ſure and certain way of bringing National Judgments upon a people; no doubt God takes great notice of the Puniſhing men meerly, becauſe they are true to him, for ſo

every man is, that is true to his Conſcience, though it be erroneous. Upon no other account was it, That *Paul* juſtified himſelf before the High-Prieſt, in ſaying, *He had walked before God, in all good Conſcience to that time.* His meaning was, He had gone according to his Light, as a thing Pleaſing to God, though otherwiſe, as to the matter, his Conſcience was erroneous, and his iudgment miſ-informed. And he tells us, afterwards, *That he obtained Mercy from God,* becauſe what he did againſt the Church, was done Ignorantly, and in purſuance of the beſt Light he then had.

The puniſhing men meerly for following the pure dictates of Conſcience, is no doubt the true cauſe of many National miſeries; And a State ſhould be careful to avoid this, as they would preſerve their own ſafety and Welfare. If we look into that which naturally occaſioneth ſeveral Opinions in Religion, 'tis that which a Prince ſhould for his own Intereſt highly encourage, and that is Knowledge; for no doubt, as Knowledge encreaſeth, it expatiates it ſelf into variety of Thoughts and Principles; and as it enlargeth all other Sciences, ſo Religion. Knowledge is the Glory of a Nation, and that by which all matters of Concern to it, as War, Trade, Policy, and every thing elſe is highly enlarged. 'Tis the high Honour of a Prince to Govern a Wiſe and a Knowing People, as well as a Great People; 'Tis an impotent piece of Policy, and equally deſtructive to all publick Intereſt, to ſay, *Subjects muſt be kept ignorant,* as to ſay, *They muſt be kept poor.* They are Maxims only fitted for a Tyrant, and ſuch who only govern for themſelves, and calculate all Intereſts,

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Intereſts, as they concentre in their own, and by ſo doing, make themſelves their own Idols. Nothing damps all Noble Undertakings amongſt men of Conſcience, like Impoſition in Religion, it makes them hang down their Heads, it makes them heartleſs in their Callings; If they are denied freedom in Religion, men of Conſcience will care little for any thing elſe. *Solomon* tells us, *A wounded Spirit no man can bear.* He that carries a taint of trouble in his mind about theſe things, is impotent in every thing; 'tis Liberty in Religion that breeds the noble and generous minds. Let a man know his duty to God, and have freedom to perform it, and that man will have Wiſdome and Courage above any man. Impoſing Religion upon men has never other effect, than either to lull men aſleep into implicite ignorance, and ſo make them as ſottiſh and uſeleſs Members of a State, as they are of the Church; or elſe, where it meets with Knowledge and Integrity, ſinks men under the greateſt grief, and provokes them to the greateſt diſ-ſatisfaction. If we look amongſt our ſelves, Who be they that deſire favour in this particular? And who be they that will be gratified and engaged by it, but every where men of Religious Principles? And are not they generally the ſober and ſerious men, that bring good to a Nation? Are not they in all Callings and Trades, generally moſt induſtrious, and thriving? Are not they moſt ſaving in their Expences, and every way, either in War or Peace, moſt uſeful and ſerviceable? 'Tis debauched, looſe, expenſive people that over-live their Eſtates, and neglect their Callings, that help to pull a ſtate down; Such men will be ſure to Conform to any thing, that

ſecures them in preſent Luxury; 'tis the ſober, Serious, Religious ſort of men, that every way make a Nation proſper; to diſcontent ſuch, and to put them into one common Dungeon of imputed Faction, and actual Perſecution, will never be found any right meaſure of a true National Intereſt.

Several things, with great Evidence, ſeem to plead for Moderation and Indulgence here in *England*.

1. The Number and Quantity of thoſe concerned, as well as the Quality is ſuch, that it can be no way prudent to diſcontent them, upon that which will no way compenſate the inconvenience; there can be no good Policy to leave ſo many men, mixed every where, even in the higheſt places of the Nation, under diſ-ſatisfaction, without the leaſt effect, but the reproach of imprudence in doing it, and to put a diſgraceful diſtinguiſhing Character upon them, as men unfaithful to the State, only becauſe they cannot comply with ſome Ceremonies (as the caſe is generally amongſt us) and worſhip God juſt in the publick way, a thing of no more intrinſick concern to the State, than to have all men of the ſame Opinion in a diſputed point of Philoſophy, and a thing of as equal likelihood to be attain'd. A Subject that gives the ſame teſtimony of his Fidelity to his Prince, that others do, and behaves himſelf in all Civil Concerns, as a faithful and profitable Member of the Commonwealth, and yet is looked upon as a publick enemy, and made the object of publick anger, becauſe he cannot in every Circumſtance comply with publick Religion, is without doubt very ſeverely and impolitickly dealt with. As every Subject hath an Intereſt in his Natural

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ural Prince, ſo hath the Prince in every Subject, and ſhould be like the True Mother that would by no means divide the Child.

Let *Liberty of Conſcience* be once fitly given, and the root of all mens hopes and pretenſions, that deſire publick miſchief, is pulled up, and the King will be the greateſt, and moſt Beloved Prince that ever yet ſate upon the Throne.

2. We ſhall never have a flouriſhing Trade without it.

1. Becauſe the Preſſure in theſe things falls generally more upon the Trading ſort of men, than any in the Nation; we may ſee it in the great City, and in all Corporations: It makes many give over Trading, and retire; It makes others remove into *Holland*, and other *Forreign Parts*; as it did heretofore from *Norwich*, to the irrecoverable prejudice of our Clothing Trade, upon the like occaſion; And it certainly prevents all *Proteſtant Strangers* to come to Live and Trade amongſt us. It puts great Advantages into the hands of the *Hollander* every way, who have not a better Friend in *Europe*, than *Uniformity* in *England*. As *Liberty of Conſcience* here, is that they fear above any thing, ſo it would inſenſibly more weaken them, than all the Victories we have obtained over them.

2. Men will never Trade freely, where they do not Live and Converſe freely; where a man is afraid to be watch'd to a Conventicle, and all the time he ſerves God, is

is fain to hide himſelf; No man will chooſe to live ſo, if he can avoid it; every man that cannot conform to the publick Religion, lying under the laſh of the Law, will prudently ſhun both Buſineſs and Company, will never lay out his Eſtate, where 'tis in any mans power to do him a miſchief. A man conſcious to himſelf, that he cannot comply with the Law, will avoid medling with any thing, and chooſe privacy as his beſt ſecurity.

3. 'Tis the King of *Englands* true Intereſt to become Head of all the Proteſtant party in the World, and he will never do that, but by firſt making himſelf a common Father to all his Proteſtant Subjects at home. That 'tis his Intereſt to Head the Proteſtant party abroad, is plain; becauſe being the greateſt and moſt powerful of all Proteſtant Princes and States, he will neceſſarily draw them into a dependence upon him, and deſire of Protection from him; by which not only the Proteſtant Intereſt in it ſelf will be much ſecured, by being ſo united and conjoyned, but the King of *England* alſo will receive a great Acceſſion of power, by the Influence he will have on ſo great a part of Chriſtendom, which he may make uſe of, not only to ſecure the Proteſtant Religion againſt the common Enemy of it, but to advantage himſelf every way, by the great reſpect and Intereſt he will have in all Proteſtant States.

To bring the Proteſtants into an union amongſt themſelves, will be of advantage to every Proteſtant State, but to none ſo much as *England*; Firſt, Becauſe *England*

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land naturally becomes the Head of ſuch a Union; And Secondly, Becauſe the Deſigns and Practices of the Popiſh party, ever ſince the Reformation, have lain, and will lye more united againſt *England*, than any Proteſtant State, as ſuppoſing that the chief Support of all the reſt; and therefore *England* can never be truly ſafe, nor ſecured in its proper Intereſt, but when 'tis invironed with all Proteſtant States adhering to it, and depending upon it. How ſadly *England* has miſcarried, when it has eſpouſed any other collateral Intereſt but the Proteſtant, has been too obvious, ever ſince the firſt Reformation: *England* has been alwayes greateſt at home, when it has been the greateſt Defender of the Proteſtant Faith abroad. Now if the King will thus rightly ſtate his intereſt abroad, he muſt begin the Work at home; if he perſecute and keep under any of his Proteſtant Subjects at home, thoſe of their Opinion abroad, will never put themſelves under his protection: As he muſt make no diſtinction in Chriſtendom, but *Proteſtant* and *Papiſt*, ſo he muſt make no other amongſt his Subjects at home. He that impoſeth any one Opinion amongſt the *Proteſtants*, and will tolerate no other, makes the diſtinction to be ſtill between *Proteſtant* and *Proteſtant*, and makes himſelf but Head of a Party amongſt them, and will never ſo heed the *Proteſtant* Intereſt, as to oppoſe the *Popiſh* party with it, or unite the *Proteſtants* ſo under him, as to make himſelf their Head.

Who ever would be Head of all the *Proteſtant* Intereſt, muſt have no common Enemy but *Popery*, and concenter all there: Impoſing Conformity to the Opi-

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nion of any one *Proteſtant* party, upon all the reſt, is but to make himſelf ſo much the weaker by every diſſenter, and is indeed totally deſtructive to the very being of ſuch a thing.

Laſtly, Liberty of Conſcience is the beſt way to ſecure us to the Proteſtant Faith, and to prevent a relapſe to Popery; the Proteſtant Religion will be faſteſt rooted, by exerting fully the Principles of it, and a throughout adhering to them; By our practice in dealing one with another, to deny thoſe Principles by which we juſtifie our Separation from *Rome*, is the ready way to make them return thither again. *Teach men, that there is no man, nor men under any one denomination, ſince the Apoſtles times, that are infallible in delivering Divine Truth. Teach men, that the Scripture is the only Rule, of Religion, and let them read it: Tell them, they are to follow no men, farther than they follow that Rule, and that every man is Judge according to the beſt Light he hath of that Rule, and how far other men comply with it, and differ from it: And that every man is bound to behave himſelf towards God, according to the Judgement he ſhall ſo make within himſelf*; all which are Proteſtant Principles, and Eternal Truths. And then collect the ſenſe which theſe principles iſſue themſelves into; and how unreaſonable will it then appear to force men to comply with the belief of others, contrary to their own; and when you have bid them uſe their Light and Reaſon, to puniſh them, becauſe they will not oppoſe it, and go againſt it. How can we otherwiſe juſtifie forcing men, where ſuch Principles are avowed, but by a flat denial of them, and recurring

ring to thoſe Popiſh Weapons of the abſolute Power of the Church, and her uncontroulable Authority; and ſo by condemning others, that upon the exerciſe of their own Light and Reaſon now differ from us, we condemn our ſelves, who upon the ſame at firſt departed from *Rome*. When we oppoſe our ſelves upon the very ſame Arguments by which diſſenters now amongſt our ſelves make their defence againſt us; and when we diſpute againſt them, we take up the ſame Argument the Papiſts uſe againſt us. There is ſcarce any conſiderable Argument urged of late for Conformity, and Impoſition, but if you trace it to the Seat, you ſhall find it in *Bellarmine* or *Suarez*. The truth is, He that cannot indure to have any differ from him in Opinion, about the Supernatural Truth of the Goſpel, and will have no Toleration of ſeveral perſwaſions of that kind, and thinks it deſtructive to mankind, and the being of every State, to ſuffer any ſo to be; That man is a Proteſtant by miſtake, and will find himſelf at home in his principles no where but at *Rome*. The farther we remove in our Reformation from the practice and Principles of the Church of *Rome*, and live upon our own, the leſs like we are to return to it. If we make uſe of their Arguments and Principles at one time, we may come to uſe them at another, and at laſt eſpouſe them all together; and what ſerves our turn at ſome times to oppoſe others, may at laſt prevail upon our ſelves. And ſo 'tis in our practices, reſerving any of their Ceremonies, may at laſt bring us to ſome of their Doctrines. He that keeps a Holiday, is within a ſtep of praying to that Saint, for whoſe ſake he keeps it, ſpecially if he have the wit to conſider why

keeps it. He that kneels, and puts weight upon it, is in a fair way to adoration: and he that is for joyning the Croſs with Baptiſm, may come to do it after Grace, and croſs himſelf in time. 'Twas Biſhop *Bonners* obſervation, when he ſaw the Reformation, and how many of the Popiſh Ceremonies were retained, being asked what he thought of it, *If they like* (ſaith he) *the taſt of our Broth ſo well, they will eat of our Beef ſhortly.*

2. Liberty of Conſcience is the great means to diffuſe Goſpel-Knowledge in Divine things, and that's the beſt and ſureſt way to bar out Popery, and lock the door upon it for ever. Ignorance is the great and only preparative for implicite Subjection. Chriſtendom cannot (I dare ſay) afford an inſtance that ever any State or People, where Divine-Knowledge, by Liberty of Conſcience, and a Liberty for the Goſpel was ſpread, were in the leaſt danger of turning Apoſtates to Popery, but have grown daily more and more into a deteſtation of it, and generally almoſt every man amongſt them, carrying a Weapon in his underſtanding to defend the Proteſtant Cauſe.

Were Liberty of Conſcience granted in *Italy*, and other Popiſh States, we ſhould ſoon ſee the Mitre totter upon the Popes head, and probably ſee as fair Churches there, as in any other part of *Europe*. 'Twas obſerved in the Wars of the *Low Countries*, That when ever any Catholick began to look into the Bible, he was not long liv'd in the Roman Profeſſion.

3. Liberty of Conſcience will breed men up with an irreconcileable diſlike to all impoſition in Religion and Conſcience, and ſo unite them in a general abhorrence

horrence of Popery, as the Grandmother and Author of it. All Chriſtendom over, all principles and parties born from a Liberty given in Religion, have an Antipathy in them to that Romiſh Yoke, and do naturally unite againſt the Popiſh Religion, as the grand and common Enemy of them all.

Let Liberty of Conſcience once be given in a Proteſtant State, and though there be never ſo many differences amongſt themſelves, yet men of all perſwaſions will concenter in that. He that has the freedom of his Religion, will be concerned to defend it, and look upon Popery as the great Gyant he is in danger of. Experience and Fact, the beſt of all demonſtrations, do evidence this: take a view of thoſe places, where Liberty of Conſcience hath been moſt given, and you will find there the greateſt averſion to Popery, that is in any parts of Chriſtendom.

Tis in other places, where other Methods of Impoſition and Perſecution are uſed, that compliance with Popery hath been attempted, and projects ſet on foot to compound the Proteſtant and the Papiſts into an agreement.

Tis Impoſition in Religion ſweeps the houſe, and keeps the Neſt warm for Popery: Liberty of Conſcience mortally ſtabs it; where that is once given, it may be ſaid to the Pope, as it was to *Belſhazzar*; *God hath numbred thy Kingdom, and finiſhed it, and the place where he once tyrannized, ſhall know him there no more.*

Laſtly, If the Church of *Rome* underſtand their own Intereſt, as we have good reaſon to believe they do, this Caſe is determined to our hands: for upon every occaſion ſince the reformation, both in *Germany*,

France, *Swisserland*, and all places where Liberty of Conscience hath been endeavoured, the Popes have *toto animo* every way opposed it, and declared it a thing perfectly destructive to the Church, and such, as where ever it was suffered, would destroy the Roman Faith; and in that Maxime, I believe their infallibility is not much to be denied. Some are so much otherwise minded, that they believe Liberty of Conscience will be the ready means to induce Popery again amongst us, the reasons of it seem invisible, unless it be to be done by some new Rule of contraries; it must either come to pass, by giving liberty in general to Protestants of differing perswasions, or else by giving liberty to the Papists themselves, as included in a general Liberty. For the first (I hope) it appears evidently to have another tendency.

And for the second, The giving Liberty to the Papists themselves amongst us, no man well informed can imagine that they should be included in any such Liberty.

Because in their practice amongst us, they refuse to give that publick assurance, every Subject ought to give of his fidelity that expects the favour due to a Subject.

And also Because their Principles are such, That if they derstand their own Religion, they can never be good Subjects to any Protestant State: He that knows not this, knows not the Roman Religion, and to prove it so by Fact.

Amongst very many other Instances, let what was done here in the time of *Queen Elizabeth* to her; and at the same time in *France* to *Henry* the Fourth, for ever lie upon Record against them. Nor can a Papist ever become a true and hearty Subject to a Protestant Prince, but by that act he ceaseth to be so. And

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as common juſtice does deny them all pretenſions to Liberty, ſo common equity oppoſeth them; for as both they and their Religion abhor giving Liberty to any but themſelves, ſo is their practice accordingly, for they never give liberty to a Soul living, that differs from them, where they are able and dare deny it. To ſay, That Liberty of Conſcience can have no other effect, but to tolerate damnable Hereſies, and all kind of Sectaries, which is the uſual way of diſcourſing it; and ſo to enlarge into all kind of ſatyrical Rhetorick upon that Topick, is to put a Bears ſkin upon it, and then to bait it. 'Twill be to impoſe a thing of a very hard belief upon me, to ſay, That Truth never gains by Liberty, and that the Impoſer is alwayes in the right, and the ſufferer in the wrong; eſpecially conſidering, he that thinks me an Heretick, another thinks him ſo, and a fourth thinks us all ſo; and all the while we are all of us weak, imperfect, fallible men, ſitting in judgment, and ſentencing one another; And there can be no other end of it, but that he that is ſtrongeſt, makes himſelf in the right, and deſtroys the reſt. When ever Truth comes to ſuffer by Impoſition, as many times it does, and comes afterwards to be ſo acknowledged, the evil of ſuch Impoſition carries its own evidence. But ſuppoſe ſuch Truth never gets any good, and Liberty ſhould be only to men under Errors and Miſtakes, 'twere not fit then to deny it, that is, 'twere not fit then to impoſe upon them; for Liberty is nothing but a Negative upon Force and Impoſition; If we conſult the good of ſuch men themſelves, ſo lapſed into Error, and deſire their Converſion, Force and Impoſition is no way to it; If we conſult

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our own Security, there is no danger at all can come by it; for as long as ſuch errors lye in the underſtanding, and are only converſant about ſupernatural things, they have no reference at all to the being or well-being of Mankind, as ſuch: What hurt does an Error in Religion do me in my Neighbour, that is otherwiſe an honeſt and good man? He is rather in that an Object of my pity, and inſtruction, than of my anger.

If we deſire to have all men of our Opinion, becauſe we think we are in the right, 'tis a very commendable thing; and if we do it with ſuch a publick Charity, we ſhall uſe only ſuch Chriſtian means, as naturally conduce to bring it about. But if through the pride of mens hearts, and the intention of their own exaltation thereby, they will have every body of their Opinion; and becauſe they cannot convince and perſwade them, will therefore force them, and trample upon them, that's an odious ſuperintendency.

To ſay, That upon a prudential Account, Liberty ſhould never be allow'd in State, becauſe 'tis that which will unite Parties, and bring them to a Conſiſtency amongſt themſelves, and ſo render them much more dangerous, is to ſay a thing upon a great miſtake. For common experience ſhews us, That nothing unites parties more amongſt themſelves, than a hot Perſecution; nor does any thing bring them ſo much together as that; 'tis like a great Storm, that drives Cattel, that are ſcattered about, altogether, and brings them to meet in one common ſhelter to ſave themſelves.

Ridley

Ridley and *Hooper* agreed in the Goal, that would hardly have diſputed themſelves Friends.

There is no bond of union amongſt diſagreeing Perſons, like Perſecution; the common concern of their Security then begets Correſpondency, Acquaintance, and ſuch Intercourſe and mutual Aſſiſtance, as endears them above any thing one to another. And for the danger there may be of any party, there is nothing ſure ſo like to remove that, as Indulging them with a Liberty: the beſt way to be ſecured againſt the diſcontent of any party, is to remove the cauſe of ſuch diſcontent; and the beſt way to be out of fear of them, unleſs you can totally deſtroy them, is to oblige them, and ſo at once to engage and win them over, and thereby disband our own fears.

A Modern Author tells us with particular remark, That *Mecenas* heretofore gave advice to *Auguſtus*, *That upon no terms he ſhould endure ſuch, who would bring in any ſtrange worſhip into the State.* I believe it, and 'twas ſuch kind of Advice (no doubt) that cauſed the ten firſt Perſecutions.

Methinks the Author ſhould have remembred, that that Advice would have kept Chriſtianity out of the World: For, if we follow the track of ſuch Policy, we ſhall find, that what we now ſay againſt Tolerating Diſſenters amongſt our ſelves, The Papiſts firſt ſaid, and do ſtill ſay againſt us all; and if we go one ſtep higher, the Heathens ſaid the very ſame againſt the Chriſtian Religion it ſelf, and thought it a Factious, Fanatick project of ſick-brain'd men, and a thing not to be endured, that

that men ſhould not content themſelves with the ſame Gods that the reſt of the World worſhiped and acquieſced in. 'Tis a ſad thing and much to be lamented, That the Proteſtants ſhould take up the dregs of thoſe Politicks, and make uſe of them one againſt another, upon every ſmall difference amongſt themſelves.

The ſame Auther, in anothor part of his Book, propounds this queſtion,

If divers ways of Worſhip (ſaith he) *be allowed in a Nation, what ſhall a Prince do? If he keep any men of any Profeſſion or Party out of employment for their Opinion ſake, he diſobliges that party; If he bring all men indifferently alike into employment, if he be of any party himſelf, he will diſoblige his own party, who will expect preheminence in that kind, and ſo in concluſion, by endeavouring to pleaſe all, he will loſe all.*

This is a knot very eaſily untyed. I will ſuppoſe a Prince ſtrict in the Profeſſion and Practice of what he thinks is the Truth; and the more ſtrict perſonally he is, the greater will the favour of Indulgence appear to thoſe that differ from him: but there is no neceſſity, that he ſhould make a party of thoſe, who are of his Opinion, diſtinct from the reſt of his Subjects; 'tis below his Greatneſs, and beſides his Intereſt ſo to do; they will ſoon become like the Sons of *Zeruiah*, Thoſe that are of his Opinion, he may think them, in his private judgment, better Chriſtians than others; but there is no Policy ſo to diſtinguiſh them, as if they were thereby better Subjects than others.

All

All men in a State, are to give the common Assurance of their Fidelity, and such who are allowed a Liberty in their Religion, when differing from the publick Profession; the Political end of it is, to make them good Subjects; and the end of that must needs be, to make them serviceable to their Prince; and there is no reason to doubt, but that they will be so, and eminently so, because they lye under an Obligation to his Favour, those of his own Opinion are not capable of. A Prince should seat himself in his Throne, with an equal Political Aspect to all his Subjects, and employ them, as their fitness for his Service qualifies them: There is no reason to narrow and limit a Prince to any Party, or to let any Party grow into such a predominant Opinion, as if the Prince were confined to them.

No mans bare Opinion in such things should qualifie him for an employment, nor no mans Opinion ought to put a Negative upon him in that kind; that is for a Prince, after he has obliged all his Subjects to him, to lose the use of a great part of them. Let a Prince but choose men to serve him, whose Ability and Fitness carries the evidence of his choice, and other Exceptions will soon vanish. 'Tis below the greatness of a Prince, to have any Subject pretend to employment, upon any score, but his judgment of his fitness for it.

The King of *France* hath heretofore often with good success employed his Protestant Subjects; Nay, has often trusted the Command of his whole Army in the hand of a Protestant, and yet feared not the disobliging of the Popish party, or being thought a man of no Religi-

on for ſo doing. 'Tis a moſt abſurd and impolitick thing, becauſe men differ in ſome divine ſupernatural things, to put them under ſuch Characters, as to make them unuſeful one to another, in all other humane things.

Let a Prince once give Liberty of Conſcience, and he obliges all Parties to him, and makes them wholly depend upon him; the tenure of their Liberty will be a tenure *in Capite*, and *Quam diu ſe bene geſſerint*; and for employing men, and diſpenſing favours to them, let all Parties with a due ſubjection lye under the Prerogative and Soveraignty of his pleaſure.

Two things are with much earneſtneſs uſually Objected againſt the grant of Liberty;

Firſt, *That it is unbecomming the Zeal and Concern a Magiſtrate ſhould have for the Truth of Religion, to give Liberty to any thing, but what he thinks to be ſo, and that ſuch a lukewarmneſs, as Liberty to ſeveral Opinions ſuppoſeth, does no way become him.*

And the Second, *That giving Liberty to men of ſeveral Opinions, is the way to propagate and encreaſe them, and is of great danger to a State.*

For the Firſt, It is very fit that the Magiſtrate ſhould eſpouſe, what he thinks to be the Truth, and keep himſelf to a ſtrict practice of it, and uſe all lawful means to poſſeſs others with it; let him uſe all the means Chriſt and the Apoſtles uſed to Convince and Convert men;

men; but let him not lay violent hands upon mens perſons, becauſe he cannot ſatisfie their underſtandings; that is Zeal without Knowledge, and Religion without a Rule, either in Reaſon or Divinity; that is to run into ſo wide an extream from *Laodiceaan* lukewarmneſs, as to become like *Paul* before his Converſion, who ſaith of himſelf, *that he was mad, perſecuting the Church.*

To ſay a Magiſtrate is lukewarm in Religion, becauſe he will not force men to his Opinion, is to ſay, He is lukewarm, becauſe he will not do a thing, that Chriſt hath no where required of him; and do a thing, that is to no purpoſe to do, for that very end for which it is done.

Tolerating men has no more in it, than not forcing men, 'tis only a Negative favour, there is nothing Affirmative in it; a Magiſtrate will never be charged with Lukewarmneſs in Religion, that makes uſe of all Goſpel-means to promote Truth, and that he may do, and yet never violate the due Liberty of any mans Conſcience. If we conſult the antient practice of the firſt Chriſtian Magiſtrates, we ſhall find it plain, That Liberty of Conſcience was given by the Chriſtian Emperours. *Conſtantine* did it fully. *Euſebius* in his life tells us, that he made a Decree in theſe words, *Ut parem cum fidelibus, ii qui errant, pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentis accipiant.* 'Tis true, he baniſhed *Arius*; but let any man conſult the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and he ſhall find *Arius* ſo factious and baſe a perſon, that there needed no part of his Opinion to be the cauſe of his exile. *Gratian* the Emperour made likewiſe a Decree for Li-

berty in Religion. The *Jews* had granted by all the Emperours, the ſame Rights with other Chriſtians. *Jovinian* and *Valentinian*, moſt noble Princes, ſuffered Chriſtians of ſeveral perſwaſions, to enjoy their Liberty: Of this, *Grotius* in his Book *De Imp. Sum. Poteſ. Circ. Sac. Cap.* 8. takes particular notice, adding theſe words, and ſaith he, which is more to be noted, *The Emperour did not only permit impunity to diſagreeing Sects, but often made Laws to order their Aſſemblies.* Liberty therefore in Religion is not either ſo new, or ſo ſtrange a thing, or ſo great a Monſter, as men would make it. State-Religions are not always infallibly true, Truth ſometimes keeps men from embracing them, it does ſo in many parts of Chriſtendom; and in that caſe a Negative Reſtraint upon the Magiſtrates compulſion, is the only ſhelter of Truth. The Wiſdom of Chriſt, who hath forbid the uſe of the Temporal power under the Goſpel, about Religion, hath left things beſt. For if a Magiſtrate be in the right, he may promote Truth, as far as in the nature of the thing, and by Chriſts appointment, it can be promoted; if he be not in the right, where the Temporal power does not interpoſe, men are ſecured in the profeſſion of Truth, and not hazard in refuſing a publick error.

He that would have the Magiſtrate force all men to his Religion, will himſelf be burnt by his own Principles, when he comes into a Country, where the State-Religion differs from him: To ſay, He is in the right, and the State that does it in the wrong, is a miſerable begging the Queſtion. If one Magiſtrate be to do it, all are to do it, and there can be no other rule of Truth and Error in that caſe, but what they think ſo. If a

Magiſtrate

Magiſtrate be once admitted to puniſh with death, what is really and truly in it ſelf an Hereſie, he may, and muſt by the ſame rule ſo puniſh every thing he thinks ſo; Where ſhall the definition of Hereſie terminate, and who ſhall ſet the Magiſtrate bounds in ſuch a caſe? Miſinformation, Paſſion, or ſome ſiniſter Intereſt, can only lead men into ſuch Principles, which tend to nothing, but to make Religion diſturb the Peace and Quiet of all mankind; and as one ſaith well, *to bring Chriſtians to a butchery one of another, and to make a meer Shambles of Chriſtendom.*

For the Second Objection, *That giving liberty to ſeveral Parties, encreaſeth them, and makes them dangerous to a State.*

Firſt, 'Tis very fit, that whereſoever you will ſuppoſe Errors to be ſprung up, all the means Chriſt hath appointed for that end, ſhould be uſed to ſuppreſs them, and reclaim men from them; let their mouths be ſtoped with ſound Doctrine, and ſpiritual Cenſures; the only Queſtion is about the uſe of the Temporal power in ſuch things: And experience tell us, That ſince the World began, to this day, Principles and Opinions in the mind were never extinguiſhed by the puniſhing the body; That old ſaying verifies it,

Sanguis Martyrum, ſemen Eccleſiæ.

Nay, there is nothing under the Sun to promote an Opinion in Religion, like making men ſuffer for it; the conſtancy and courage of men in ſuffering for an Opi-

nion, will sooner perswade men to it, than all the Discourses and Sermons in the World.

If the Magistrate take a violent course to root out all different Opinions in Religion, such as the Emperors heretofore, when Heathen, took with the Christians, and the Popish States, where they are able, do at this day with the Protestants, besides the cruelty of it, with which he will besmear himself, he will miss of his end, and find a succession of those Principles in others, rising out of the Ashes of those he destroys, as it used to be said heretofore by the Martyrs,

Quoties moriemur, toties nascemur.

If he take a mild and more gentle way of persecution, he only exasperates them, and then leaves them armed with all possible discontent.

Consider the giving of Liberty under these two heads.

First, the giving of it to several Opinions and Parties, where they are already actually existing.

And secondly, The giving Liberty so, as will occasion and produce such Parties and Opinions.

For the first, Where there are several Parties in Religion already in being, and diffused all over a Nation, as the Case is with us, it is the best way to indulge them, for they are by their number outgrown the political part of persecution.

For

For the second, Consideration of Liberty, the giving it so as will naturally produce several Principles and Opinions in men, he that would prevent that, must give no Liberty to the Protestant Religion, must not let the Bible be read by the Vulgar: There is no way to keep out several Opinions in Religion, but an implicit ignorant subjection to an imposed Infallibility, and to do as the *Turks* do, who will not have any Learning or Discourse amongst them of Religion, for that very Reason, because they will have no Religon but *Mahomet*, nor no Learning but the *Alcoran*; such policy to murder mens Souls is hatched in Hell.

The very Art of Printing was at the first thought dangerous, because it was looked on as a thing like to introduce several Opinions in Religion.

Cardinal Woolley, *in a Letter of his to the Pope, hath this passage about it.* That his Holiness could not be ignorant what divers effects the new Invention of Printing had produced; for as it had brought in and restored Books and Learning, so together it hath been the occasion of those Sects and Schisms which daily appeared in the World, but chiefly in *Germany*, where men begin now to call in question the present Faith and Tenents of the Church, and to examine how far Religion is departed from its Primitive Institution. And that which particularly was most to be lamented, they had exhorted Lay and Ordinary Men to read the Scriptures, and to pray in their Vulgar Tongue. That, if this were suffered, besides all other dangers, the common People at last might come to believe that there was not so much use of the Clergy; for if men were perswaded once they could make their own

way to God, and that Prayers in their Native and Ordinary Language might pierce Heaven, as well as Latin; How much would the Authority of the Mass fall? How prejudicial might this prove unto all our Ecclesiastical Orders? Lord *Herberts* Hist. of *Henry* the Eighth.

Liberty of Conscience lies as naturally necessary to a Protestant State, as Imposition to a Popish State; he must be a good Artist that can find a right middle way between these two. 'Tis the Glory of Protestant States to have much of the knowledge of God amongst them, and that variety of mens Opinions, about some less weighty, and more obscure matters of Religion, as it much tends to a discovery of the Truth of them, so it no way breaks the Bond of Protestant Union, where men generally agree in the same Rule of Religion, and in all the chief and necessary Fundamentals of Salvation. Liberty of Conscience in such States, as it is their true and genuine Interest, and without which they will but deny themselves those advantages they might otherwise arrive at; so with the forementioned *Boundaries*, can never prove hurtful or dangerous, there being always a just distinction to be made between those who desire only to serve God, and such who pretend that, to become injurious to men. And thus we have seen, that not only Religion but Reason, not only Duty but Interest, do invocate Princes and States in this Particular: To whom it may fitly be said in the words of the Psalmist, *Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings, and be instructed, O ye Judges of the Earth.*

I shall now add, by way of Post-script, a Citation out of an ingenious Book, Entituled, *An Humble Apology for Nonconformists*, &c.

Post-script

Poſt-ſcript.

HAD you rather that *Quakers* and *Romiſh Seducers* ſhould gather up Multitudes; and that Taverns, Alehouſes, and worſe places, ſhould on the Lords day be filled with the number of thoſe that abſent themſelves from the publick Aſſemblies, rather than that they ſhould be tolerated to hear a Sermon of Faith and Repentance, and other Duties towards God, and of Loyalty to the King, of Love and Charity one towards another, in a private houſe? For my own part, I confeſs in this Caſe, I would much rather go learn what that means, *The Harveſt truly is great, and the Labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harveſt, that he would ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt.* Again, it is to be conſidered, that Mr. *Dod*, Mr. *Hilderſham*, and others, were ſilenced formerly but in ſome Dioceſſes, and for ſome time; afterwards they got divers times liberty to preach. Mr. *Cotton* had a Licenſe to preach, under the broad Seal of *England*, procured by Biſhop *Williams*, then Lord Keeper, notwithſtanding his Inconformity. Mr. *Cartwright*, notwithſtanding he had writ ſo much, and ſo ſharply againſt Conformity, was ſuffered to preach, and enjoyed a place of Maſter of an Hoſpital at *Warwick*, to his

his dying day. Yea, Mr, *Brown*, the Father of the *Brownists*, if we believe the Hiſtorian, was ſuffered to keep a Living, and that no mean one, (*Achurch* in *Northamptonſhire*) to his Death. The Biſhops in thoſe dayes, if they turned Men out of their Pulpits, let them have a Livelihood; either ſome way from their Livings, or elſe permitted them, or connived at leaſt at their teaching of School. My Schoolmaſter at a Grammer School, was one that had left a Living, rather than he would Conform. And 'tis ſtoried of old Mr. *John Fox*, by Doctor *Heylyn*, that though he refuſed to ſubſcribe to any thing but the Greek Teſtament, yet he enjoyed his Prebends place in *Salisbury* till his dying day. 'Tis worthy our notice, that theſe mens Yoak was more eaſie than ours: And that notwithſtanding they are thought to be of different Principles from the preſent *Nonconformiſts*, yet certain it is, that they held it lawful to preach and pray, and keep days of Humiliation in private Houſes. And I was told by one Mr. *W.* That *he never had any other Ordination but Prayers and Impoſition of hands; by old Mr.* Dod, *and ſome other Miniſters his Friends, in a private Houſe.*

Upon the conſideration of the Premiſes, my hearts deſire is, That the preſent Age may labour to *imitate*, and *ſurpaſs* the Age paſt; the Right Reverend the Biſhops their Predeceſſors, in their Forbearance and Moderation; and the *Nonconformiſts* theirs, in their Meekneſs and Peaceableneſs; That the Biſhops would endeavour to be Reconcilers, and Repairers of our Breaches, and Reſtorers of our Pulpits to preach in; and that the *Nonconformiſts* would deſire nothing but what may become Sons of Peace, and ſuch as earneſtly long after Unity,

and

and had much rather, as becomes Labourers, be admitted to work in the Vineyard, than to ſtand any longer idle in the Market-place: Or as becomes Fiſhers of Men, to be caſting their Nets on the right ſide of the Ship, than to ſit any longer mending their Nets on the Shore. That ſo the Ages to come, when they ſhall read the Hiſtory of this Generation, when we all (*Conformiſts* and *Nonconformiſts*) are laid down to reſt quietly together in our Graves, may have no occaſion to riſe up and ſay, *That whereas the late War had made its thouſands of Separatiſts, Rigid Conformity had made its ten thouſands:* And all too, during the peaceable Reign of our moſt Gracious Soveraign, (a Son of Peace) *CHARLES the Clement*; as he hath manifeſted himſelf, by his Royal Letters and Declaration from *Breda*, his Royal Declarations ſince, and his preſent Princely Clemency; And this too, notwithſtanding great Animoſities, Exaſperations, and Irritations of ſome, on the one hand, out of an inordinate Zeal; and many Weakneſſes, Follies, and Provocations of ſome on the other, for lack of Knowledge.

FINIS.